

Close the Door by g00denough

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Summary: its fluff Bc they are fluffy little love muffins ft Dad Hopper - its cute, very cute Because we are just waiting for when someone walks in on El and Mike kissing and since I'm currently in mileven withdrawal I decided to make my own crack. Welcome to the fluff zone sh

Close the Door

September 5th, 1985

The bell thundered down the hallway as they stepped thru the double doors. "Just be normal. Like we practice," Mike said to her. "You're gonna do fine."

"Promise?"

"Promise."

As the group of six walked into their first class they immediately took their regular, upfront and center, seats. Eleven sat timidly in the desk next to Mike. Dustin dropped his bag carelessly on the other desk next to Eleven. "Hey El," he whispered, "you ready?"

She laid her new notebook on her desk carefully, lining her sharpened pencil next to it parallel. "Ready," she said, looking at Dustin with a genuine smile. She had been doing that alot the last few months, smiling. Mike said she looked beautiful when she smiled, so she smiled a lot around him, just to here him say it to her again.

It was calm now. After the Snow Ball they had gone back to their normal lives. El lived with Hopper still, she could walk outside now and go to Will's house where Mrs. Byers would watch the kids with a careful eye. The summer flew by them. They went swimming, watched movies, played D it was everything they wanted from a 3 month summer break. It was even better with El and Max with them.

"Jane Hopper." The teacher looked at the classroom of fidgeting teenagers, looking for the girl called Jane.

"Say here," Mike whispered to her.

El took a shaky breath and followed his advice, "Here."

"Hopper," said the teacher, "Any relation with Chief Hopper?" she asked.

They had been over her cover a hundred times before today. She

repeated the monologue in her head until it became a mantra. *I'm Jane Hopper. I'm 14 years old. I'm from Florida. Chief Hopper is my Uncle. I'm living with him while my parents travel.* It was simple enough. Most people wouldn't ask questions after the first week. At least, that's what Mike had said.

"What was that?" the teacher asked her.

"Oh, um, yes. He is my uncle," she said just loud enough for her to hear.

The teacher looked at her kindly, "Well that's nice. Welcome to Hawkins, you'll love it here."

They day went on like that. The group would shuffle class to class, their schedules arranged so they were together all day, at the request of the Police Chief. Teachers would call roll, notice the name "Jane Hopper", ask a quick question, then move on. She got better at responding by the last class. Her voice loud enough that the teachers didn't have to lean in anymore.

Eleven decided that she liked school. She was interested in class. Her friends were with her. And Mike was always close. She liked that Mike was close. He made her feel safe outside.

Mike always made her feel safe. He helped her learn how to read and do math. He taught her the history and science lessons she would be expected to know as an 8th grader. It was a lot of information to take in, but Mike helped her. So did Lucas, and Dustin, and Will, and Max. They all helped her learn.

Over the summer she decided that she liked Max. She refused to acknowledge her at first, but since she and Lucas started to date, Eleven started to like Max more. Max taught her things that the boys couldn't. Like how to do makeup and ride a skateboard. They would go shopping with the party but always ended up together in a dress store corner. Eleven loved the boys, but her time with Mrs. Byers and Max, what she later learned to call *Girl Time*, was also fun.

February 23rd, 1986

A 3 page essay on a book of their choosing. Great.

Mike and El (yes, Mike still called her El) had fallen into a happy cycle of events. On Thursdays they would go to the small shed that Chief Hopper cleaned up for El. It took months of trust building and hours of negotiating on El's part to get Hopper to leave them alone. There was two rules. That they actually do something productive and that they tell him when they were there. It wasn't until El had promised not to stay at the small cabin past dark that Hopper finally said yes.

So they sat on the bed in the small cabin with their small mound of snacks piled near the pillows. They both had small books with them, along with 3 pieces of paper and a pencil. Their plan was to start their books and write at least half a page. The essay wasn't due for two weeks. Just a little work everyday would get it done in no time.

But their plans normally didn't work out so well. At least the ones where they did homework. They would get caught up in movies or tv shows, listening to music, making waffles. And when they actually did get to opening their books it just became more of a challenge. Mike knew that El was doing a really good job at learning and trying to keep up with everyone academically, but she was still behind. She would get confused when the numbers got too big in math, or wouldn't know what a word meant in a book. Mike didn't mind helping her, plus he got to tease her for it sometimes. Like the time she didn't know what secret stash of magazines she found in the basement meant. Mike had a hard time explaining that, but it was just funny to them now.

So they opened their books, ready to get something done. Mike read silently, the only sound was the pages turning rhythmically every minute or so. El stared at the words, she found that skipping over words she didn't know was easier than asking Mike what they meant all the time.

Mike began writing a few sentences on his lined paper, his scribbled writing just straight enough to be legible. He looked at El, who was blankly staring at the pages.

"Need some help?" he asked, the first noise she heard in nearly 20

minutes.

She looked up at him then to his pile of work. He was nearly a quarter page in, his words bouncing from one to another. "I'm fine," she insisted.

"Are you sure, you know I don't mind helping you understand," Mike told her.

El stacked her book and papers together and moved them to the table. "Music," she said.

Mike had gotten used to these one word gestures now. When she talked like that it normally sounded like cold demands. But Mike knew better. It was just her normal way of speaking when they were alone. When she was in larger groups he could see the way she thought about every word that she spoke. So when they were alone, she reverted back to her simple vocabulary. She spoke quietly but with emotion.

Mike got up and walked to the record player in the other room. El followed him and watched as he fingered thru the vinyls until stopping on the one he knew she liked. "Every Breath You Take" by The Police. Mike began playing the song, just like he's done a hundred times. He slid toward her in short zig-zag steps along with the beat. El laughed, they had done this a hundred times.

He would walk up to her.

"Do you wanna dance?" he asked with a grin.

"I don't know how," she responded, holding in a laugh.

"We can figure it out," he said as he took her hand.

"Together" they said in unison, just like they did every time.

They danced across the room, the music echoing thru the small rooms. It was a dance they've done before. It always started in the main room, where they danced around the sofa and table. Their hands locked together as they swayed thru the room to the music. The beat kept them moving together, until they would end back to

the bed, just like always.

They laughed as they dramatically danced in the room. Mike bouncing on the bed and Eleven climbing up to join him as the chorus started. Mike belched the chorus out, making El laugh as she watched him make a fool of himself for her. As the song wound down and the echos quieted to nothing they both sat on the end of the bed and laughed.

Mike loved they way El laughed. She had learned how to laugh with him. It was a gift he gave to her. And she gave that gift back every time that precious sound escaped.

El was still in a fit of giggles, only glaring at Mike in between her fits. He glanced at her in that way that made her stop everything.

They had matured a lot in the past months. Holding hands was easy, hugs were even easier. They were just like any other young couple. Awkward in a way that made moms squeal saying how cute they were together.

But kissing. That was something they were still figuring out. They didn't do it often. Only when they were in that moment together. And every kiss was different, but the same. It was a peck followed by a smile and happy silence. Sometimes they would kiss twice, but that's only happened a few times.

Mike made the first move, just like he always did. Their heads tilted and lips meet and departed within seconds. Mike's hand was on top of El's, their fingers curling towards each other. Mike looked at El her face held the smallest grin that expressed the happiest feeling. Suddenly El was leaning in again. El never led. It was always Mike who kissed her, not the other way around. But their lips meet again and they stayed together just a little longer than the last time.

"Wow." Mike's cheeks had flushed red but he wasn't embarrassed, not with her.

"Wow," El agreed.

El leaned in again, and this time Mike was ready. He moved his lips

and El did the same. It was still a children's kiss. Still innocent, still naive. But it was more to the two of them. It was the start to something just a bit less innocent.

Mike was leaning in again, high off this new type of kiss. His lips brushed her again and they moved just a little more. His hand held her hip and her hands were loosely around his neck, as if they were still dancing.

"Hey kiddo, I was wondering if you and Mike wanted to..." Chief of Police, Jim Hopper stood in the doorway. He was obviously upset, but not angry. No, he wasn't angry. It was more of an embarrassed, shocked look.

Mike jumped back, going into the air as he tried to move away from El as fast as he could. "Hi Chief, we were just..." Mike wasn't able to finish his sentence. The door slammed shut on Hopper.

"Hey! Kid! Let me in, now!" Hopper yelled from outside.

There was an audible click as the lock closed him out. Mike looked at Eleven, there was just the tiniest drop of blood under her left nostril.

"Nope. This is not okay! Jane, you let me in now! Right now," Hopper demanded.

Mike still sat on the bed, horrified that they had just been walked in on by the Chief of Police and El's dad. Mike was already preparing for the following weeks of being stared down and supervised by a man double his size.

"No," El said. Loud enough for Hopper to hear. "Not dark yet. Still time," she continued.

Hopper, knowing he was never going to win this fight, laughed. "Fine. Mike?"

Mike squealed at his name, "Yes sir?"

"You better be a gentleman, you hear?" The poor boy couldn't see, but the officer had the biggest grin over his face.

"Yes sir... absolutely," Mike said, his voice cracking.

"Hey kid?" he said, his tone dropping to a kind gentleness. There was a long pause. Hopper took it as an approval to speak. "Just close the door next time, alright?"